

Rivne State Humanities University

**Department of Fine and Decorative Applied Arts named after Stepan
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THEORETICAL JUSTIFICATION

scientific research on the topic

The symbolism of war in the transcultural dimension of the 21st century

(on the example of the decorative composition)

performed by a master's student

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Introduction

Human society has undergone tremendous changes in the 20th century. In the past 100 years, mankind has experienced global wars, the Cold War caused by ideological confrontation, and the explosive development of science and technology. Human life is changing with each passing day, and people's thoughts have shown amazing creativity after the changes. In the 20th century, new trends and art schools of astonishing scale emerged. Dadaism, New Fauvism, Pop Art, Futurism, Surrealism, Postmodernism and other shining names have condensed the thinking of artists throughout the era on beauty.

In the 21st century, most countries have entered a state of peace. In this social environment, more and more people have begun to think about war.

This article analyzes and discusses The symbolism of war in the transcultural dimension of the 21st century, demonstrates the artistic value and communication value of war-themed works of art, analyzes the creative background and creative ideas of war-themed works, and seeks inspiration for the decorative composition of war-themed works in the 21st century. Through the article's demonstration, the combination of decorative composition theory and practice is completed, and the practical process is demonstrated.

Keywords: war-themed artworks, artistic trends, decorative composition, communication value;

1. The role of war in the course of human history

1.1. The nature of the war

The aim of war, to disarm or to defeat the enemy, must always be the object of the conduct of war, however it may be stated. War is not the action of living forces upon dead matter; it is always a conflict between two living forces.

Traditionally, war has been viewed as a direct confrontation between nation-states, characterized by decisive battles in which military force is the decisive factor. This classic concept of war, centered on the use of brute force, is a continuation of other political means to resolve conflicts between states and dominated people's understanding of armed conflict until modern warfare.

1.2. Evolution of Warfare Model

There are five stages of war :

First generation warfare: Massive armies → war machines;

Second generation warfare: mobile warfare → positional warfare;

Third Generation Warfare: Mobile Warfare/Blitzkrieg;

Fourth generation warfare: nation-state conflict → asymmetric conflict;

Fifth Generation Warfare: Incorporating Advanced Technologies

From the beginning of the 21st century to the present, due to continued geopolitical turmoil, technological advances, and changes in global culture, institutions, and relations, warfare has undergone significant evolution, mainly including:

Cyber Conflict and Cyber War. All confrontations that occur in cyberspace, including attacks on critical infrastructure, the spread of disinformation, theft of sensitive data, and sabotage through malware or ransomware. These conflicts are characterized by asymmetry and can be conducted remotely, making it difficult to attribute responsibility to attackers;

Global terrorism. Refers to all extreme acts of violence aimed at advancing a political, religious or ideological agenda by instilling fear in a wider population than those directly affected. Since the attacks of September 11, 2001, combating such global actions has become a security priority for many Western countries;

Hybrid Conflict. Hybrid conflict combines conventional military tactics, unconventional operations and criminal acts, as well as information warfare and cyber warfare, mixes state and non-state actors, and can occur simultaneously in multiple domains, including the physical and virtual domains;

Proxy Wars. A conflict in which one or more countries support third-party groups (such as rebels, insurgents, or mercenaries) against a common enemy without direct involvement. Such wars allow supporters to achieve geopolitical goals while keeping a low profile and limiting risk;

Environmental Conflict. Conflicts arising from disputes over natural resources or exacerbated by the effects of climate change. These conflicts can range in intensity from localized tensions to outright wars and often involve a combination of state and non-state actors;

Rebellion. Deployed against established authority, it seeks to overthrow

pre-established power through the use of force. Unlike traditional civil wars, insurgent movements are characterized by unconventional tactics and widespread popular support, often in response to perceived injustice or oppression.

Warfare, once characterized primarily by direct confrontation on the battlefield, is shifting to other areas related to information, economy, culture, and the military, blurring the distinction between the “state of war” and the “state of peace.” These changes have triggered a constant reconceptualization of the content, form, and meaning associated with war, making it difficult to pinpoint the exact moment when conflict turns to war.

1.3. Positive consequences of war

Satisfy the unified needs of initiators and promote the integration of national cultures.

This was the case with the unification of Qin Shihuang and Emperor Wen of Sui. In line with the trend of historical development, when class contradictions became irreconcilable, a unified empire came into being.

Destroying the sovereignty of colonized areas while bringing in advanced science, technology and ideas.

During the Qing Dynasty, the country was closed to the outside world, which made the Chinese people live in a feudal and lifeless country. The war broke the rule of the Qing Dynasty, allowing people to see another form of civilization outside the feudal empire, and also made people aware of the harm of opium. The Japanese Unit

731 was notorious for its evil deeds. During the Anti-Japanese War, it used a large number of bacteria for live experiments on Chinese people, and later it used a large number of bacteria and viruses in the war. With the evil deeds of live experiments, Japan made its own biotechnology far ahead of the world.

Awakening of national consciousness.

In the process of resisting British colonial rule in North America, national consciousness was formed (divided into four stages: 1. From colonization to American independence, the consciousness of national identity with Britain; 2. From American independence to the Second Anglo-American War, local national consciousness based on states; 3. From the Second Anglo-American War to the American Civil War, the difference in consciousness between the North and the South, the South considered itself an independent nation, and the North had American national consciousness; 4. After the Civil War, the overall formation of American national consciousness)

A warning to those who come after.

Before World War I, many people were proud of war and were very enthusiastic about it. However, after the two world wars, people's anti-war consciousness began to awaken, and the game between big countries often caused the suffering of small countries. Since the 20th century, anti-war thoughts and anti-war movements have emerged one after another. This has brought fundamental help to our struggle for a peaceful and stable life.

1.4. Negative consequences of war

In 1618, a 30-year-long war began on the European continent. In the shadow of this war, a painting depicting the suffering of war emerged, accurately capturing the despair and helplessness of the people at that time. It is a large canvas oil painting "The Consequences of War" created by Peter Paul Rubens between 1638 and 1639. The size is 206 cm x 345 cm. As an artist with superb painting skills and a diplomatic mission, Rubens witnessed this catastrophe with his own eyes. Thirty years of war raged, leaving countless lives in ashes and cities in ruins.



p 1-1 "The Consequences of War"

Strikingly, Rubens depicted Venus, a symbol of love and peace, with delicate brushstrokes. She was trying in vain to stop the god of war, Mars, but her tenderness and charm were so powerless in the face of the violence of war.

Through "The Consequences of War" we can see the negative consequences of war:

1 .Local culture is on the verge of extinction , resulting in the loss of books, skills, land, and cultural relics . The trampled books at the bottom of the picture symbolize the fall of art and knowledge in the war. In the lower right corner, a mother looks up in horror at the gathering violence, trying in vain but desperately to protect her crying child.

2.Life is devastated, people are displaced, there is no food source , the population is reduced, and diseases spread . The picture shows the incarnation of plague and famine, as well as the goddess of harmony destroyed by war. These elements together construct a grand narrative about war. In the center of the picture, the Roman god of war Mars, holding a shield and a blood-stained sword, has just rushed out of the gate of the Temple of Janus, symbolizing the unstoppable and destructive power of war. The red robe and shining armor of the god of war form a sharp contrast with the gray and dilapidated scene around him, highlighting the heat and destruction brought by war.

In order to express his deep hatred for war and his desire for peace, Rubens used his brush as a weapon to create "The Consequences of War". This painting not only has extremely high artistic value , but also is a profound reflection on the devastating consequences of war . Rubens skillfully used rich colors and vivid composition to vividly show the horror and destruction of war to the viewer.

As the pinnacle of Rubens' artistic career, art historians believe that this work is not only a direct accusation of war, but also a profound reflection on the fragility of human civilization in extreme environments. It reminds us to cherish peace, oppose war, and jointly protect the harmony and beauty of this world.

2. A model of military themes in the field of art

2.1. Evaluation of ancient war art works

In the 19th century, romanticism, which emphasized subjective feelings and irrationality, emerged in France. Liberty Leading the People was created by the painter Delacroix, who was known as the "Lion of Romanticism". The work was based on the "July Revolution" in France in 1830, showing the battlefield of the street fighting in Paris filled with gunpowder. The main image is the image of the Statue of Liberty, who is holding high the red, white and blue flag and leading the revolutionary team of workers, intellectuals and the petty bourgeoisie.



p 2-1 "Liberty Leading the People"

The painting adopts a compositional form of standing upright, with the corpse lying on the ground, the warriors fighting, and the goddess holding the French tricolor

flag high, forming a stable and dynamic triangle with a rigorous structure. In terms of color, the red, white and blue colors of the French flag are used as the main colors of this painting. In the background filled with thick smoke, the low-purity character portrayal highlights the image of the goddess .

The red flag is particularly eye-catching, and the strong color contrast makes the picture passionate and unrestrained, giving people a full sense of power. The painter uses symbolic techniques to combine reality with romantic imagination. The bold and magnificent brushwork, rich and fiery tones, and the dramatic effect formed by strong light and shadow create a vivid, tense, and exciting atmosphere with exciting power.

The work symbolizes the French national spirit and marks the maturity of Delacroix's art.

2.2. Evaluation of Modern Military Art

Guernica is a giant oil painting created by Spanish Cubist artist Pablo Picasso in 1937. The painting is based on the bombing of Guernica, a major Basque town in northern Spain by the fascist Nazis . This gray, black and white oil painting, painted on a canvas 3.49 meters high and 7.76 meters wide, depicts the suffering brought about by violence and chaos. The painting highlights the horned horse, bull, screaming woman, dead baby, dismembered soldier and flames. The work combines Cubism, Realism and Surrealism to express pain, suffering and bestiality, depicting the tragic situation of the Spanish town of Guernica after it was bombed by German planes.



p 2-2 "Guernica"

The organization of the images and the arrangement of the composition of this painting are very casual, even a little messy, which seems to be consistent with the chaotic atmosphere of residents fleeing in panic during the bombing, while the arrangement of the internal shapes and images has a strict and unified order.

In the center of the picture, different bright images overlap each other, showing the exaggerated and deformed images full of dynamics and excitement in a unified and orderly manner. At the same time, the artistic effect of clip art is shown by hand-painting, which effectively highlights the tense and terrifying atmosphere of the picture.

The images of horses, cows and victims symbolize the chaos of war and the devastation of civilians. They convey Picasso's profound criticism of war and denounce the inhumane atrocities of the fascist war with exciting figurative art language.

Guernica is not only a classic work of anti-war art, but also an important cultural symbol of protest against war and tyranny in the 20th century. It attracted widespread attention when it was first exhibited and had a profound impact on subsequent artists.

2.3. Summary and analysis of the core ideas and creative thinking of military-themed works of art

Military-themed artworks are never created out of thin air. There are several reasons why artists choose to create such works. For example, Rubens' "The Consequences of War" mentioned above was commissioned by Grand Duke Ferdinand II of Tuscany. Rubens was free to decide the theme of his work. He wanted peace and chose to create a painting depicting war, using a large number of myths and objects to convey the tragedy of war to the viewer.

In addition to being commissioned to create works, there are also many cases where the creators themselves reflect on the war and create works. For example, the "Liberty Leading the People" mentioned above was created to commemorate the July Revolution of 1830, which overthrew the power of King Charles X of France. In a letter to his brother, Delacroix wrote that the painting he was working on (Liberty Leading the People) relieved his depressed mood. Even if he could not fight for the country, at least he would paint for the country.

The series of works "Reliefs of the Monument to the People's Heroes" created by Chinese artists help the country and the people commemorate and remember the heroes and martyrs by showing historical events. Such works are often large in scale and volume. Most military-themed works of art revolve around a certain war and express the author's thoughts from various dimensions, such as praising brave and fearless soldiers, praising wise and resolute leaders, or expressing people's yearning for freedom and peace.

3. Decorative composition image creation

3.1. The emergence of ideas and the search for composition

Wars in the 21st century are "unrestricted wars". Modern wars focus on the control of technological advantages and natural resources. Modern wars have various forms of expression, mainly using advanced technology to achieve offensive and defensive goals. Wars involve complex and diverse fields, tools and strategies. The unlimitedness of war means the unlimitedness of war symbols. Any object, color, or language in life may become a symbol of war. Take the ban on the Palestinian flag as an example. Against the backdrop of the intensifying Palestinian-Israeli conflict, Israel has repeatedly promoted bills to ban the display of the Palestinian flag in public. Such behavior has caused a sensation worldwide, and people have ridiculed and supported Palestine on the Internet. As a result, the three colors of black, white and green have a new symbolic meaning, namely, concern for Palestinian victims, condemnation of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, and a call for peace.

Based on the diverse themes, I chose wood carvings with vitality to create in terms of art form. The work is 30 cm high, 20 cm wide and 20 cm long, and is a regular rectangular box. The four sides of the rectangular box are carved with primitive people holding sticks, generals holding long knives, soldiers holding guns, and doves of peace holding olive branches.

In the composition design process, I first studied the series of reliefs located on the Monument to the People's Heroes in Tiananmen Square, Beijing, China.

The "Relief of the Monument to the People's Heroes" was created in 1958. The

relief vividly depicts the arduous journey of the Chinese people in striving for self-improvement, resisting foreign powers, and striving for national independence and people's happiness and freedom over the past 100 years from the Opium War to the founding of New China. Most of this series of relief works are based on war moments, and their composition ideas and creative techniques are worth learning from.



p 3-1 "Wuchang Uprising"

In 1952, sculptor Fu Tianchou participated in the design and production of the relief sculpture of the Monument to the People's Heroes in Tiananmen Square. In 1958, the large white marble relief sculpture "Wuchang Uprising" he presided over was completed.

This relief of "The Wuchang Uprising" adopts a narrative style, realistic expression form and sculptural techniques. Through the creation of 14 characters, it depicts the iconic moment of the outbreak of the 1911 Revolution when the revolutionary armed soldiers attacked the Huguang Governor's Mansion on October 10,

1911. It adopts the method of seeing the big from the small and defeating the majority with the few, demonstrating the great power of the 1911 Revolution to overthrow the feudal monarchy and the unstoppable trend of historical development, and reproduces the struggle process of the old democratic revolution led by Mr. Sun Yat-sen to overthrow the feudal monarchy.

When talking about his experience in creating the relief of "The Wuchang Uprising", Fu Tianchou once said that the original composition of "The Wuchang Uprising" was in the shape of a "one", and this layout made people feel that the impact was weak.

When finalizing the work, he rearranged the layout, canceled the "I"-shaped composition, added layers to the back of the relief, and at the same time strengthened the "attack" form of the composition, dividing the fourteen people into two groups, the first group being two officers and three soldiers storming the door of the Governor's Mansion; the back group was eight people, forming a fan-shaped composition of about 700 degrees with the lower left corner as the axis, presenting an exploding momentum, providing strength support to the front group.

Through the organization and layering of characters, the author creates an evocative sense of form.



p 3-2 “Nanchang Uprising”

In the sixth painting, “Nanchang Uprising”, the red flag becomes the visual center of the picture, showing the shocking scene of the army rushing towards the enemy camp at the moment when the horn of the uprising was blown. The PLA soldiers launching the charge and the horses resisting the reins, each image has a sense of entity “frozen in motion”.

The creation of the Monument to the People's Heroes absorbed the essence of Western art on the basis of inheriting traditional Chinese art. The image is created in a realistic way, with the characteristics of clarity, simplicity, overall refinement, and delicate surface. The cohesion and centripetal force of the people when the country is about to perish are fully reflected through composition, and the multi-level contrast changes and echoes in the surge of people complement each other.

Many characters and equipment are arranged in the vast painting, and the overall tone and local color are coordinated to unify historical truth and artistic truth. The

large-scale and large-scale picture composition is very compact, hierarchical and rhythmic. The relief creates a visual illusion of three-dimensional depiction and light and dark contrast, making the characters vivid and three-dimensional. Typical events are used to reflect the overall picture of a specific era. The composition highlights the rendering of major scenes and the overwhelming momentum of the people's war. The overall sculpture gives people a sense of the epic artistic conception of "The Great River Flows East", achieving the purpose of perfectly expressing the theme.

The Monument to the People's Heroes is an important milestone in China's public art in the 20th century. The relief design of the monument reflects the idea of "people" as the theme, highlighting the national characteristics and national spirit.

3.2. Creative interpretation and shaping of the artistic image of “war symbols in cross-cultural dimensions in the 21st century”

Since I chose wood carving as the art form of my work, I referred to many classic war-themed works of art in terms of composition, such as "The Consequences of War", "Liberty Leading the People", "Relief of the Monument to the People's Heroes", "Capture of Jinzhou", etc. I came to the conclusion that the composition should be based on people, and the evolution of war should be reflected through the carving of the characters. At the same time, the work should highlight the main characters and minimize the influence of the background or other elements. According to the above composition ideas, I completed the composition design of the work.



p 3-3 Composition 1

The image of a primitive man holding a stick is used as the pattern on the front of the rectangular box. The line drawing shows the image of a primitive man holding a stick. Since the carving needs to be carried out through the line drawing, the composition is relatively rough and the picture is simple and neat. Although the picture is simple, the primitive man holding the stick has sharp eyes, well-developed muscles, strong limbs, and smooth lines. It is conceivable that the perfect image will be presented after the carving is completed.

The reason why I chose primitive people as the first scene of the work is to express that war is not unique to modern society. In primitive society, humans had not yet solved the problem of food and clothing, and civilization had not yet emerged. At that time, humans fought like animals for the right to mate or for food and territory, and

these fights were likely to evolve into group wars.



p 3-4 Composition 2

The second picture shows a general holding a long sword in the cold weapon era. The character is wearing Chinese-style armor and battle robes, and the long sword in his hand is called the Green Dragon Crescent Blade. The character selected is Guan Yu, the most famous general in Chinese history. In Chinese stories, he is the embodiment of force, benevolence, and wealth. As a god of war, Guan Yu can arouse the Chinese imagination of war.

In the era of cold weapons, wars did not decrease. On the contrary, due to the increase in population, cultural development, and the improvement of productivity, the rulers of the feudal era launched wars quite frequently. The characteristics of cold

weapon wars in the feudal era should also include large scale. Taking China as an example, in 612 AD, Emperor Yang Guang of the Sui Dynasty launched the first expedition against the Goguryeo Kingdom entrenched in the Korean Peninsula and the Liaodong Peninsula. His expeditionary force was said to be two million, but later someone counted it for Yang Guang, and the actual number was 1.13 million, a total of 24 armies. More than 300,000 troops died in this war, and the number of casualties was even more difficult to count.



p 3-5 Composition 3

The third picture shows the image of a Chinese revolutionary soldier, wearing

leggings, sandals, shorts and shorts, which is a typical image of a soldier from southern China during the Red Army period. This image triggers thinking about the impact of modern wars.

Since the 20th century, with the development of science and technology, the scale and intensity of wars have reached their peak. World War II swept the world, involving about 2 billion people, with more than 90 million people directly participating in the war and a total death toll of about 70 million. Such an intense war has had a profound impact on the world, and there are still many unresolved issues left over from World War II. These issues have caused new conflicts and wars in the new century. Today, the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Korean-North Korean conflict, and the Burmese civil war have become normalized. The number of casualties caused by war is increasing every day. For those of us living in this era, opposing war and praying for peace is the wish of each of us.



p 3-6 Composition 4

The fourth picture shows a dove of peace holding an olive branch. As a symbol of

peace that transcends historical and cultural dimensions, the dove of peace is a popular element among people all over the world. The world is not peaceful at present. According to the 2024 Global Trends Report released by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the number of forced displacements around the world surged last year, reaching a record high.

The total number of forcibly displaced people worldwide has risen to 120 million by May 2024, the 12th consecutive year of growth, reflecting new and evolving conflicts and unresolved protracted crises. This figure would make the global population of displaced people equivalent to the 12th largest country in the world, about the same size as Japan.

The shocking and growing figures repeatedly remind the world of the importance of limiting and stopping wars. The last picture of the work, a dove of peace flying dynamically, seems to have flown from history, witnessing more than 14,500 wars in history since the first war of mankind, and billions of people died in wars, flying to us in the 21st century. It seems to tell us the simplest truth - peace is the main theme.

Through the first three pictures, we can see that no matter how human society develops, wars will always break out in every historical stage. These wars include just wars, evil wars, and controversial wars, but wars for any reason should not exist. Only cooperation can lead to win-win results, and only peace can lead to cooperation. This wood carving work will use the image of war to introduce the dove of peace and the world's call for peace. In particular, it expresses sincere greetings and high respect to the people in conflict and turmoil, and to the soldiers who defend their country.

3.3. The true embodiment of creativity in materials

3.3.1. Execution Technical Analysis

(Jianchuan Woodcarving and Chaozhou Woodcarving)

Regarding the execution technology of the graduation work, I first learned about the wood carving craft and creative process in detail by purchasing books and consulting online materials. The more well-known and referenced wood carving schools in China mainly include Jianchuan wood carving and Chaoshan wood carving.

Jianchuan County, Dali Prefecture, Yunnan Province, is located in an important position on the Ancient Tea-Horse Road. It has been a place with rich cultural heritage since ancient times. It has produced many intellectuals and skilled craftsmen. Carpenters' carvings are a great pride of Jianchuan and once became the symbol of Jianchuan. At that time, the most famous woodcarver in Jianchuan used hardwood for carving, and the payment was calculated according to the sawdust from the carving, one tael of sawdust was one tael of silver.

The history of Jianchuan woodcarving can be traced back to more than 1,000 years ago. When the Nanzhao regime of the Bai Dali Kingdom was strong, many Han craftsmen were recruited or captured from Guizhou and Sichuan to build palaces and towers of the Dali Kingdom. As a result, these Han people also introduced woodworking and carving skills to the Dali Kingdom in Yunnan, and later integrated the ethnic style of the Bai people, gradually forming the wood carving culture of Jianchuan, which has an increasingly greater influence. Since ancient times, there has been a saying in western Yunnan that "Lijiang Baba and Heqing wine, Jianchuan

carpenters are everywhere."

According to Zhang Hong's "New Discourse on Southern Yunnan" in the Qing Dynasty, "Jianchuan is a barren place with little food, and its people have been carpenters for generations. In the more than 70 prefectures and counties in Yunnan, as well as in the neighboring provinces of Guizhou and Sichuan, anyone who is good at using rules and axes is a swordsman."

"A Brief History of the Bai Nationality" records that 72 main halls and 360 magnificent nunneries built on Jiuzu Mountain since the Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties were mostly built by the well-known Jianchuan carpenters. From this, it is not difficult to see that after countless times of measuring lines with ink and swinging axes and chisels, generations of Jianchuan craftsmen have gradually won the hearts of the people with their unparalleled woodworking skills.

After the founding of the People's Republic of China, Jianchuan woodcarving has made greater progress. Important buildings such as the Great Hall of the People and the National Culture Palace in the capital are decorated with Jianchuan woodcarving. Today, it has developed into six categories with more than 260 varieties of inlaid stone woodcarving furniture, craft hanging screens and table screens, lattice door series, ancient buildings and interior decoration, tourist handicrafts, and modern furniture. It is a traditional cultural product that combines artistic value, ornamental value, collection value and practical value. "The golden dragon is carved to dance in the sky, the golden rooster is carved to announce the fifth watch, the white bird is carved to sing on the branch, and the carved flowers attract bees." This is a white song used to

describe the exquisite Jianchuan woodcarving skills.

Jianchuan woodcarving fully demonstrates the high artistic level and cultural accomplishment of the Bai people, blending the original rough and bold style with the delicate and exquisite Jiangnan woodcarving, becoming one of the important schools of woodcarving in China. Its living space has a profound traditional culture, not only the "Lu Ban Meeting of the Carpenter Ancestor" on the eighth day of the eighth lunar month that is still popular today, but also the largest number of carpenter stories, carpenter ballads, narrative poems, etc., which are widely circulated in China. Jianchuan woodcarving is of great value to the study of Bai history, craft development, etc.

Chaozhou woodcarving is a folk carving art mainly popular in Chaoshan area and the southeastern coastal areas of Fujian. On May 20, 2006, Chaozhou woodcarving was included in the first batch of national intangible cultural heritage list.

Origin: Chaozhou wood carving can be traced back to the Tang Dynasty. During the Zhaozong period of the Tang Dynasty, Liu Xun worked in Guangzhou. He mentioned in "Lingbiao Yilu" that ivory carvings, wood carvings, robes and wooden shoes had already demonstrated extraordinary production techniques and levels during this period. It can be seen from this that Chaozhou handicraft industry had a high degree of completion in its craftsmanship during this period. By the mid-Song Dynasty, wood carvings were widely used in large buildings such as temples. The climax reached the Ming and Qing dynasties, when Chaozhou wood carving art developed to a new height, and its carving skills became increasingly perfect. The Thousand Buddha

Pagoda currently in Kaiyuan Temple is of exquisite craftsmanship, and the sculptures such as "Fairy Fairy Sending Her Son" and "Fu Lou Monkey" now collected by the Chaozhou Museum are even more pleasing to the eye. The Anbu Cultural Temple, built in Qinianwen tomorrow, mainly uses Chaozhou wood carvings in its architectural decoration, with exaggerated shapes, exquisite workmanship, and strong artistic appeal.

Material selection: (camphor wood or fir) attaches great importance to the use of space, and is famous for its meticulous and complicated openwork and through-carvings. The spatial composition and carving levels pay attention to "evenness, miscellaneousness, and thoroughness"

Drawing: Draw the basic shape to determine the location of the carving.

Carving: There are many techniques and tools for carving. There are five types of carving techniques: sunken (concave) carving, relief (convex) carving, round (three-dimensional) carving, through-carving (multi-layer) and saw-through carving (single-layer). Through-carving is the most outstanding and has epoch-making significance in the history of the development of wood carving art.

Themes: Chaozhou woodcarvings have rich themes, including magnificent and intricately carved shrines and incense burners; screens with elegant patterns and gorgeous decorations; opera characters and popular stories that are both similar and different, with both form and spirit; dragons and phoenixes that symbolize auspiciousness, and plum, orchid, bamboo and chrysanthemum that symbolize purity and loyalty.

Chaozhou woodcarving is not only an art form, but also a symbol of cultural heritage and lifestyle. It carries the wisdom and emotions of the Chaozhou people and is the pride of this city. As one of the representatives of traditional Chinese crafts, Chaozhou woodcarving still has important significance in today's society. It is not only an art, but also a spiritual heritage.

Through the study of traditional Chinese wood carving, the style of the work was determined on the basis of the determined composition. Since it needs to be assembled into a box and mailed to Ukraine, the weight and volume of the work cannot be too large. Therefore, a two-centimeter thick plate is selected for carving. Such a material thickness can only be created by bas-relief. Bas-relief has a low starting position, a large body compression, a strong sense of flatness, and is closer to the form of painting to a greater extent. More use of painting depiction techniques or perspective, illusion and other processing methods to create a more abstract compressed space, which is conducive to strengthening the dependence of relief on the carrier.

3.3.2. Material selection

The materials used in traditional Chinese wood carvings are mainly camphor wood, fir, mahogany, etc., which have different characteristics.

Camphor wood is often used for round sculptures and reliefs because its golden color is eye-catching and it has a unique fragrance that has excellent insect repellent properties. Therefore, camphor wood is often made into relief or round sculptures and placed indoors for people to appreciate.

Fir is a kind of wood that is easy to grow and has stable properties. In traditional

Chinese sculpture, artists often use it to make large sculptures. A large part of these works are part of the structure of the building. The beams, columns, doors and windows of traditional Chinese buildings are mostly carved and very beautiful. This is also the origin of the phrase "carved beams and painted buildings".

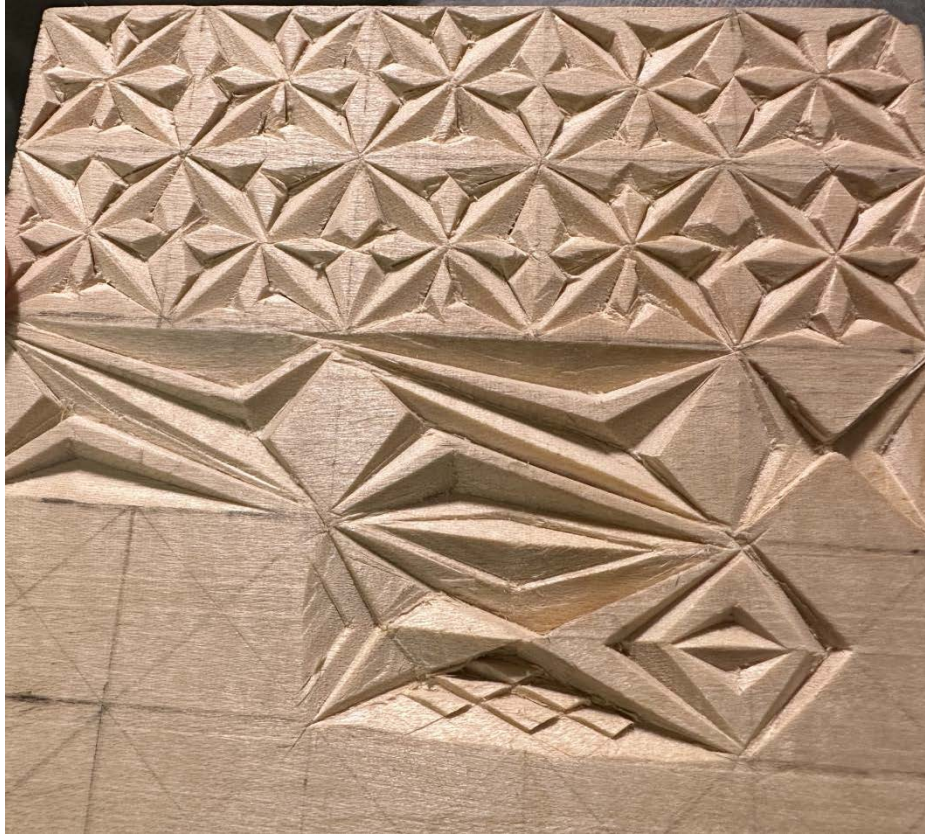
Rosewood is not a tree. Reddish and dense woods such as red sandalwood and rosewood are all called rosewood. These woods are usually made into furniture for people to use after being carved. Rosewood is a hard wood. The carving of rosewood is usually done by machines or by highly skilled craftsmen.

My graduation work uses basswood as the material. This is a kind of wood with moderate hardness and fine texture. The carving process of basswood does not require very high carving tools. Using basswood as the material, I can easily use common carving tools to do the embryo and polishing work.

4. Practice process

4.1. Necessary exercises before work

After determining the form of the work and completing the composition of the work, the work entered the practical stage. Before the formal carving, I first practiced carving for about four months. I hoped to discover the technology, concepts and other problems in the process. Before carving the figures, I learned about carving techniques and became familiar with the carving knife by carving geometric patterns.



p 4-1 Geometric pattern exercises



p 4-2 Try complex pattern combinations



p 4-3 Try Still Life Sculpting



p 4-4 Try text engraving



p 4-5 Try to design composition sculpture 1



p 4-6 Try to design composition sculpture 2



p 4-7 Try design composition engraving 3



p 4-8 Try design composition engraving 4

Practice conclusion. Due to lack of experience, I was not brave enough to carve boldly and always carefully cut off the excess wood. This made my work efficiency very low. To solve this problem, I consulted many books, such as Chris Pye's "Woodcarving", "woodcarving course & reference manual". By reading these books, I learned how to draw reference lines to determine the cutting depth and choose the right tools to improve work efficiency. Another problem was the incorrect way of using the carving chisel. I always used my hands to push the carving chisel to remove the wood. This method was inefficient and consumed my hand strength, affecting the sustainability of the carving. I contacted local woodcarving practitioners, watched them do their carving work, and exchanged carving experiences with them. They taught me to use a wooden mallet to hit the carving chisel, which would save effort and produce better carving results. Through practice, I also found that I lacked skills and basic ideas for facial carving. In practice works, I dared to boldly try to carve various parts of the body, but I didn't dare to carve the face easily. This is because the body part has more wood and simple lines, and I can easily make modifications. But the face of the character is small in area and complex in structure, and it is very difficult to carve. If I make a mistake in facial carving, it will be difficult to recover. And if the facial carving makes a mistake, the entire sculpture will lose its value. Such psychological pressure makes it more difficult for me to complete the facial carving independently. In response to the problem of facial carving, I bought and consulted professional books, learned about carving techniques, increased my practice, and after many attempts, I finally solved the problem of facial carving in the official version of the carving.

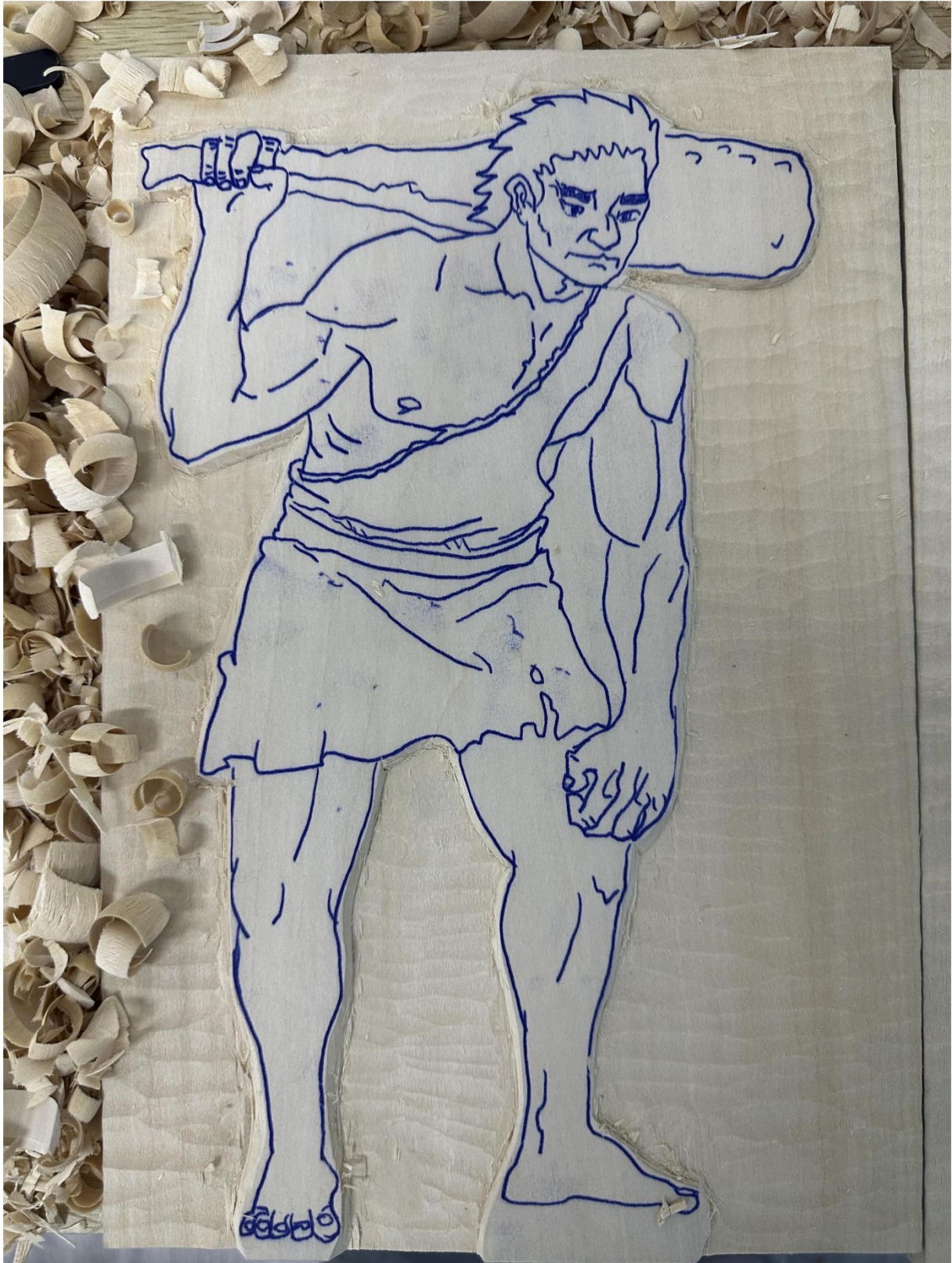
4.2. Formal carving work

After a long period of extensive practice, I officially started to practice partial carving in May 2024. The first step of carving is the transfer of the composition and the embryo work.

Embryo work content:



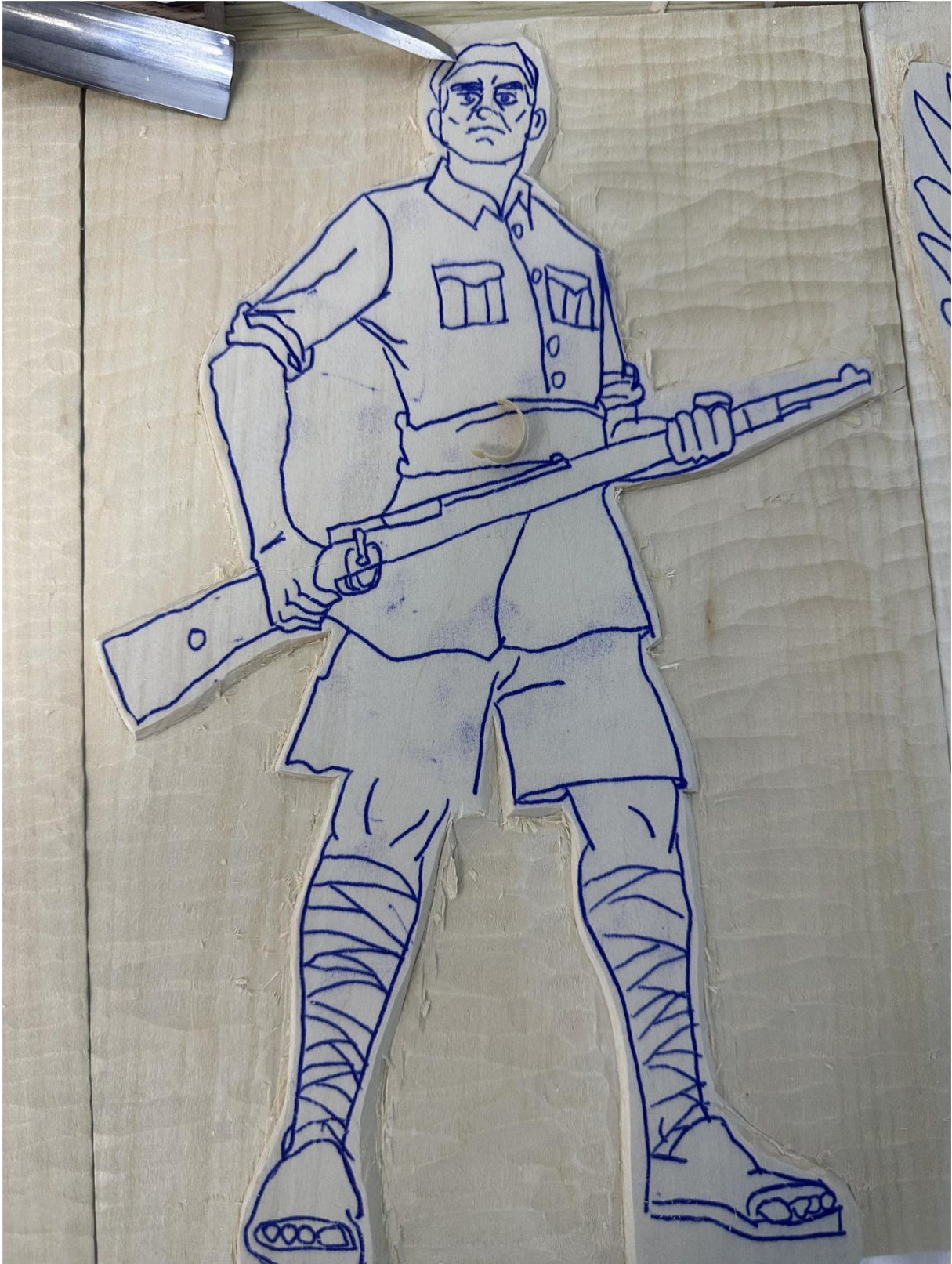
p 4-9 The embryo work of composition 1



p 4-10 Composition 1 embryo completion



p 4-11 Composition 2 embryo completion



p 4-12 Composition 3 embryo completion



p 4-13 Composition 4 embryo completion



p 4-14 Embryo completion

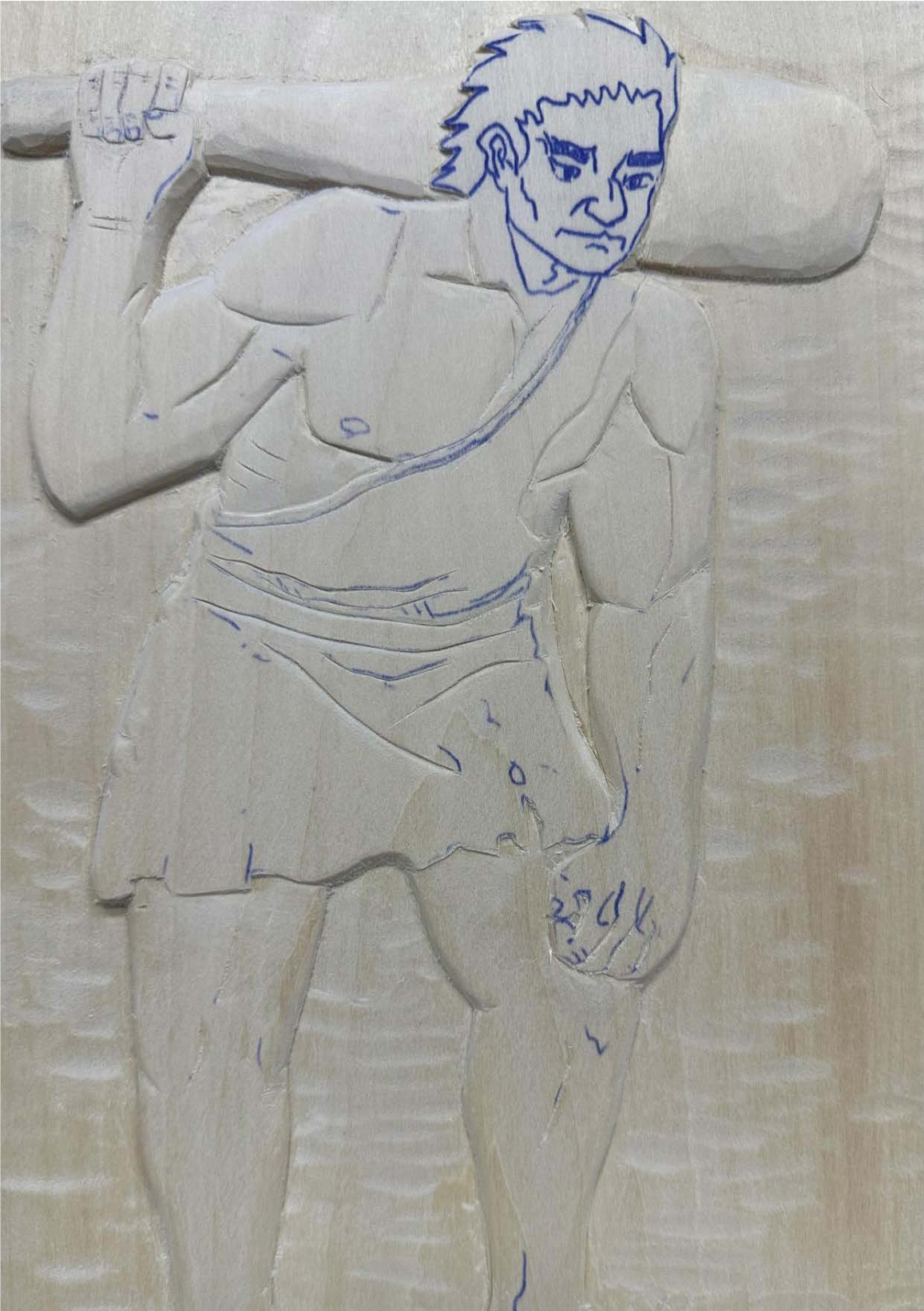
Summary of the work of making the embryo:

It took a certain amount of time to complete the work of making the embryo. The work uses 2 cm thick basswood board, and according to the principle of shallow relief design, 0.5 cm of wood is reduced in the background. There are four sides that need to be carved, which is a big project.

The difficulty of the roughing work is not to reduce the wood too much or too little. I tried to complete this work as finely as possible. However, due to the lack of a large flat round knife that is more suitable for this work, I used a 20mm shallow round knife to complete the work, which left a lot of uneven marks on the background surface. This mistake does not affect the finished product, but it will increase the workload of the later polishing work.

This problem reminded me that using the right tools can help me get the job done more efficiently and perfectly.

Rough carving work content:



p 4-15 Composition 1 rough carving completed



p 4-16 Composition 2 rough carving completed



p 4-17 Composition 3 rough carving completed



p 4-18 Composition 4 Rough carving completed

Summary of rough carving:

After completing the rough carving, I found that the details were not perfect enough and still needed to be processed and the face carving should be completed as soon as possible. The three-dimensional sense of the work is weak at this stage, and it needs to be strengthened in the later steps such as bottom carving.

Another major problem in rough carving is the coordination of the hands and feet of the work. To solve this problem, you need to continue practicing, observe excellent relief works, and explore carving techniques.

Face sculpting work:



p 4-19 Face sculpting



p 4-20 Face sculpting



p 4-21 Face sculpting

Summary of face carving work:

Face is difficult to carve, need to carve a large number of lines in a limited area, and carve a three-dimensional sense according to the structure of the face, which requires an understanding of the facial muscle and bone structure.

In the process of century carving, I concluded that facial carving needs to be done with small tools. The carving of the eye requires vertical carving using a circular chisel and a modification with an oblique knife.

Assembly work :



p 4-22 Fixed-angle cutting of the plate



p 4-23 Fixed-angle cutting of the plate



p 4-24 Assembly and fixation of panels (glue bonding)

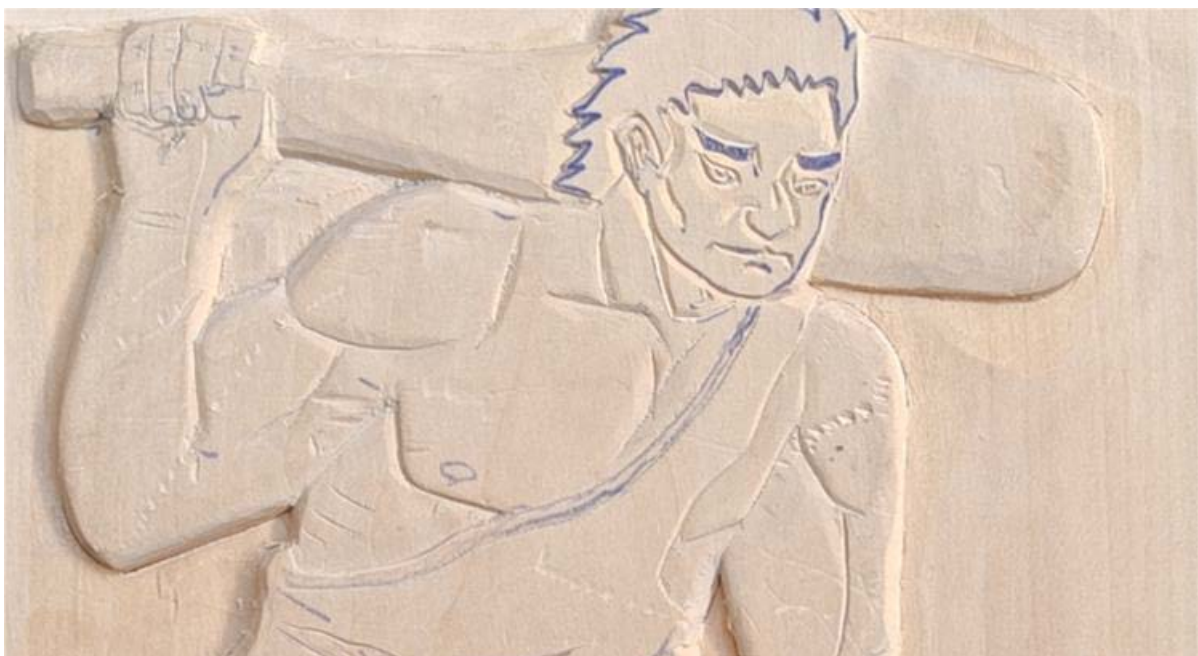


p 4-25 Assembly completed effect display

Summary of assembly work:

To complete the assembly of six wooden boards, it is necessary to cut the two sides of each board. The cutting angle is 45 degrees, so that the boards can be spliced into a regular rectangular box. If you use a manual saw for cutting, it is easy to make mistakes, which will affect the splicing effect. In order to use a table saw with a fixed angle for high-precision cutting, I found a local professional woodworking workshop to help me complete the cutting work.

After cutting, use professional woodworking glue for bonding, and use straps to fix it for one day to complete the bonding work. During the fixing process, because the straps are fixed with metal buckles, part of the composition 1 area is damaged, and fine grinding is required to solve the problem later.



p 4-26 Composition 1 The shoulder is partially damaged

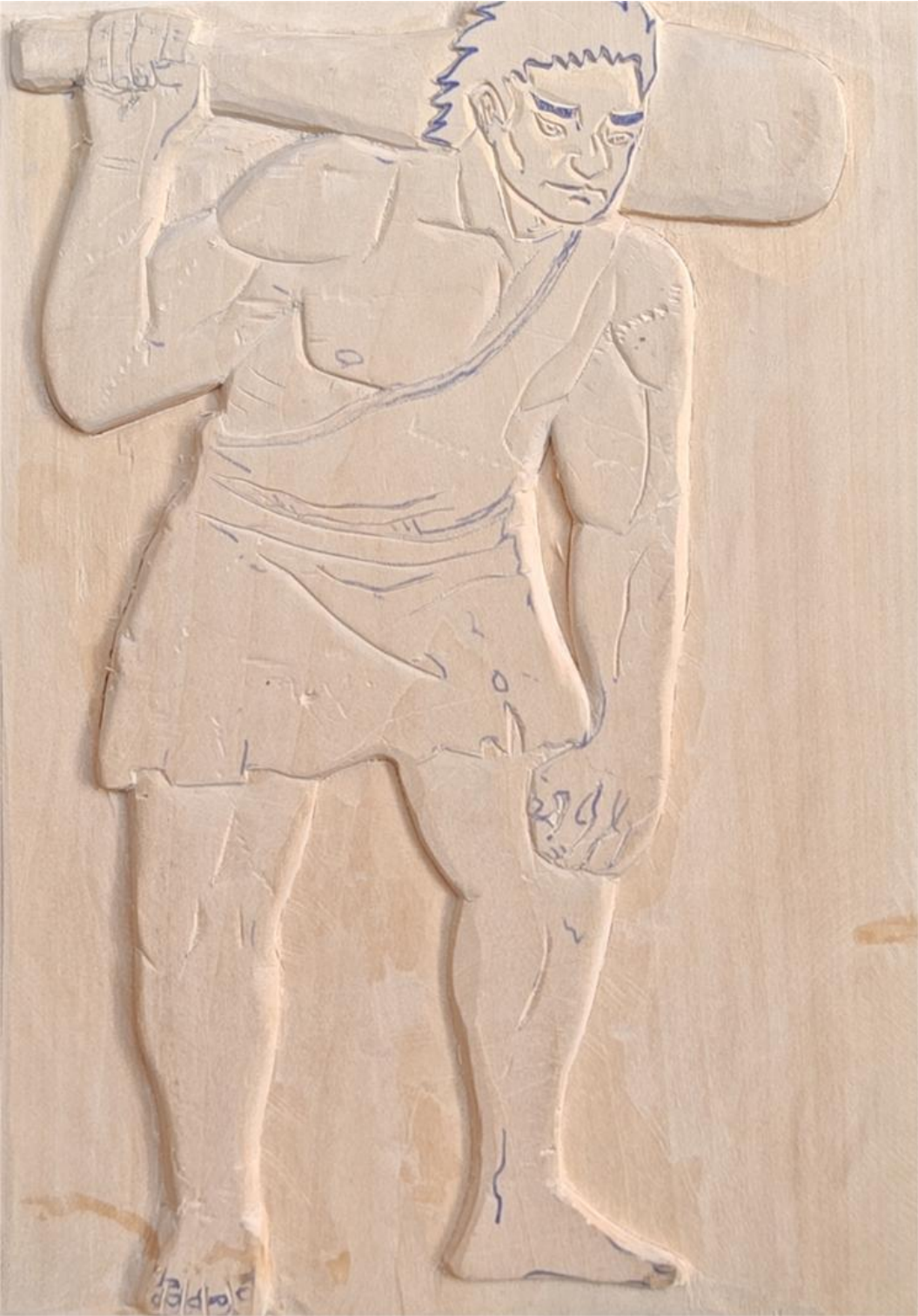
The lid of the wooden box was cut by a machine to obtain a loose lid that can be placed directly on the top of the wooden box. After the lid was completed, it was tested for use and found that the gap was large and affected the appearance. This problem was solved by finely grinding the bottom of the lid and the top of the box.

p 4-27 Cover gap before sanding



p 4-28 Cover gap after grinding

Grinding and polishing work:



p 4-29 Composition 1 background polishing completed



p 4-30 Composition 2 background polishing completed



p 4-31 Composition 3 background polishing completed



p 4-32 Composition 4 background polishing completed



p 4-33 Composition 1 polishing completed



p 4-34 Composition 2 polishing completed



p 4-35 Composition 3 polishing completed



p 4-36 Composition 4 polishing completed



p 4-37 Cover polished



p 4-38 Works and the main tools

Summary of polishing work:

In the polishing work, the first thing to be completed is the polishing of the background. In this process, due to the mistakes in the previous work, some deep scratches appeared in the background, and there were also some areas where the wood was not completely eliminated, and there were redundant parts.

In order to solve this problem, I first bought a larger flat knife to level the background. After the leveling work, use the polishing tool for comprehensive polishing. First, use 180-grit sandpaper to grind off the scratches and protrusions, and then use 260-grit, 320-grit, and 400-grit sandpaper to polish step by step. Finally, a flat background surface is obtained.

In the process of polishing the main body of the figure, due to the shallow depth of the engraving, low-grit sandpaper cannot be used for polishing, which will affect the lines that have been carved. I directly used 400 sandpaper for polishing during the polishing process, which is less efficient but safer.

After the sanding work is completed, the painting work will be carried out. After cleaning the dust on the surface of the box, evenly apply pure natural tung oil, which can penetrate into the interior of the wood and has the effects of waterproofing, cracking and insect resistance. At the same time, the penetration of tung oil into the cross section is more obvious when it penetrates into the wood, so the cross section carved by the carving knife will show a darker color. Such color difference helps to enhance the three-dimensional sense of the bas-relief.

Finished product display:



p 4-39 Finished Product



p 4-40 Finished Product



p 4-41 Finished Product



p 4-42 Finished Product

5. Conclusion

The creation process of the work is actually the process of studying relevant materials to understand historical knowledge and then thinking about war. No matter from which angle we think about it, we can come to the conclusion that the new era of the 21st century should not be an era of war.

As artists, we cannot influence the development of the world or interfere with the decisions of rulers. But I believe that this is an era of democracy, an era of openness, and an era of tolerance. As long as we artists create high-quality works and spread our ideas, this society will always be positively affected.

The tide of the times is rolling forward, and each of us is just a drop of water in the torrent of the times. At this moment, I hope that the traces left by my drop of water can bring changes to the world. Just like my works, I use doves of peace to bring peace, and use wooden boxes to lock up wars, so that everyone can appreciate beauty from every angle.

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